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ABSTRACT

The director of a church-owned child care center implemented and evaluated a 10-week practicum intervention designed to decrease the number of playground accidents, maintain insurance coverage, and provide age-appropriate, safe playground equipment. Due to several accidents that had taken place on the center's playground in the past, the insurer requested that two pieces of equipment be either modified or removed. To meet objectives of the intervention, the playground's vertical climber was shortened from 7 to 5 feet; the depth of surface under swings was increased from 8 to 10 inches. All requirements of the insurance company were met. Teachers at the center were trained to effectively supervise the playground and help children respect and obey playground rules. The incidence of accidents was minimized. The project also demonstrated that the practicum's objectives could be met on a limited budget when team members worked cooperatively. Appendices provide a playground improvement rating scale, a center survey sheet, and a safety manual that includes a playground safety checklist and lists of playground safety habits. Twenty-eight references are included. (RH)

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Training Staff and Students in Safety
Procedures and Practices for A
Preschool Playground

by

Marva Shelton Jenkins

Cohort XXXIX

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A Practicum Report Presented to the National
Master's Program for Child Care Administrators
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the degree of Master of Science

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I, Hattie R. Thomas Board Chairperson of Ascension Child Care Center,

do attest to the knowledge of the activities described in this practicum.

The Child Care Board of Directors were made aware of the unsafe playground

equipment by the insurance company. As a result an agenda of activities

were established to discern the best means of solving this problem. As

Chairperson of the Board, I was actively involved in a step by step progress

of this imperative project done by Marva Jenkins .

Practicum Title Training Staff and Students in Playground Practices
and Procedures for a Preschool Playground

Student's Name Marva Shelton Jenkins

Cohort #39 Date January 25, 1991

Verifier's Name Hattie R. Thomas Hattie R. Thomas
(please print -----and sign)

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AUTHORSHIP STATEMENT

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my own work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

1/31/91
Date

M. J. Jenkins
Signature of Student

Abstract

Training Staff and Students in Safety Procedures and Practices for a Preschool Playground. Jenkins, Marva S., 1991: Practicum Report, Nova University, Master's Program for Child Care Administrators.

Descriptors: Playgrounds/ Playground Activities/ Physical Recreation Programs/ Recreational Activities/ Safety/ Safety Education/ Accident Prevention/ Preschool Education (Activities and/or Experiences That are Inte) Primary Education Education Provided in Kindergarten through G/ Early Childhood/ Preschool Children (approximately 2-5 years of age) Elementary Education (Education provided in Kindergarten or grade)/ Preschool Education or Primary Education of Early Childhood Education or Preschool/ Children or Elementary Education.

To decrease the number of playground accidents and maintain insurance coverage, the Child Care Center needed to make the necessary changes to provide age appropriate, safe playground equipment.

The author designed a plan, which, when implemented, included the following items: introduced a project schedule, introduced a playground checklist, involved students in writing playground rules, shared the importance of playground safety, with nurses from a local hospital, began work on the playground, reviewed accidents that occurred prior to and during a ten-week period, involved students in role play and observed staff members in implementing playground rules, notified the insurance company of renovations and compliance, and used a rating scale to check progress.

The survey indicated that all centers have accidents and most of the accidents occur inside the facility, if the center enrolls infants, and outside on the playground, for preschoolers, however, most of the accidents are minor accidents. This means first-aid on site, no professional care is required (doctor's office or hospital).

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Chapter 1

BACKGROUND

School and Community Setting

The setting of the problem situation was a church-owned child care center of average size, located near the downtown section of a large city. The center was adjacent to a residential low-income socio-economic area. Children attended from the immediate neighborhood and surrounding areas. Under the present state license, the capacity for occupancy was 73 students with a ratio of one adult per ten students.

The target population was the Black female who was the head of the household and the mother of two-and-a-half to five-year-old children. To qualify for subsidized day care, the client must be employed, enrolled in school, Project Independence under Health and Rehabilitative Services, or Protective Service. Unsubsidized care was available; however, the client was responsible for 100 percent of the fee.

A Board of Directors was authorized to govern the center. This board and the director of the center reported monthly to the Session, the ruling body of the church. The center was financially supported by federal funds, and all fund-raising was done independently.

The writer's role was that of administrator, overseeing the total operation of the center. She supervised the staff, the office and kitchen personnel and did all banking and some bookkeeping. She also assisted in curriculum planning, ordering and purchasing all items except food, and sponsoring a minimum of four annual fundraisers.

Chapter 2

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Identification of the Problem

After a three-year tenure, the liability insurance for the center had to be renewed. Records indicated that within that period of time several accidents had occurred. The insurance company was requesting modification or removal of two pieces of playground equipment which had been labeled inappropriate for preschool children. Furthermore, to avoid cancellation of the insurance policy, fewer accidents had occurred. Two students, a three-year-old female and a five-year-old male, incurred broken bones, while others sustained minor injuries.

The center and the Board of Directors committed themselves to solving this problem to ensure the safety of the children and to avoid the cancellation of the insurance.

Since many playground directors are anticipating the publication of a current playground guide, "It would certainly be helpful if the government could publish an update to the existing playground guide sooner than is presently contemplated" Stout (1988: 41). The United States Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) in Washington, D.C. was the office responsible for publishing and distributing the guidelines. Much has been written on playgrounds, from their

evolution with original designs to their present state with innovative creations. Playgrounds are thought to have originated in Boston in 1886 and were called sandgartens (Frost and Wortham, 1988).

When Friedrich Froebel established the first kindergarten in 1837, children were encouraged to build dams in streams, tend gardens, play running games, care for animals, etc. (Frost and Wortham, 1988). These activities fostered sound educational and cognitive development, character building, and physical training.

A national survey and study of nursery schools and kindergartens conducted in 1920 by the White House Conference on Child Health and Protection revealed a need for more play space, extensive research and improved standards for leaders (Frost and Wortham, 1988). After the turn of the century, swings, seesaws, jungle gyms, etc. were included as outdoor play equipment.

These and other recommendations have been made in recent years concerning planning and designing safe, well-constructed, age-appropriate equipment, scheduling regular maintenance checkups, and hiring an alert, agile, safety-conscious staff, capable of writing and implementing playground-safety rules. These guidelines are essential to provide a safe environment for outdoor activities for preschool-age children.

Accidents can and do happen everywhere. However, it is important that we minimize the number and severity. Time and records substantiate the fact that the majority of accidents

occur on the playground. As a result, artists, educators, manufacturers and architects are working cooperatively to improve the equipment to help make playgrounds an extension of the indoor curriculum (Stout, 1988).

Realizing the importance of play, the state of Massachusetts passed a law in 1909 requiring all towns of 10,000 or more people to establish public playgrounds. Recommendations for supervised public playgrounds were published by the Committee on Equipment of the Playground Association of America in 1910. Equipment was made of steel, iron and wood (Frost and Wortham, 1988). Recommendations were made for all girls and boys younger than ten years of age.

Excellent checklists have been prepared by several early childhood magazines and journals that can suffice until the U.S.C.P.S. Commission releases its guidelines. Directors are using these resources to improve the quality of safety for young children (Stout, 1988).

The editor of Child Care Center, a current magazine, interviewed six representatives of major manufacturers of playground equipment, asking two questions:

1. How do manufacturers know what is appropriate for young children since standards for playgrounds are not provided by the government for preschool children in the United States?
2. How does your company design playground equipment to meet the physical development needs of children in centers?

It was interesting to note that each representative was concerned about the growth, development, challenge, safety and cost to the center. More leverage for negotiations exists now than ever before because input and cooperation are needed from everyone for the safety of all children in the construction of safe, appropriate, affordable equipment.

To accomplish these goals, the following persons were interviewed:

Doug Allen, Director of Marketing, Game Time, Inc.,
Fort Payne, Ala.

Hattie Parker, Early Childhood Consultation, Kompan,
Inc., Winsor Locke, Conn.

David McNull, President, Kids-Play, Inc., Falkville,
Ala.

Grace Koopman, Early Childhood Consultant, Big Toys,
Northwest Design Products, Inc., Tacoma, Washington

Gary Harrison, Vice President of Sales, Iron Mountain
Forge, Farmington, Mo., and

Tracy Hall, Marketing for Unisource, Landscape
Structures/Mexican Forge, South Delano, Minn.

A study by National Electronics Injury Surveillance System, unpublished analysis, for calendar year 1988 Washington D.C., U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission revealed, the following data in Young Children, 1989.

Playground accidents reach their peak in the spring of the year and close adult supervision is recommended while children are at play.

National estimates of injuries on the playground caused by or related to equipment resulting in emergency-room visits by children in 1988 are the following:

Swings account for 78.1 percent of accidents.

Seesaws account for 9.7 percent of accidents.

Monkeybars account for 57.2 percent of accidents.

Slides account for 42.8 percent of accidents.

Percentages of playground accidents by type of equipment and age of child are the following:

Table 1

Percentages of Playground Accidents
by Type of Equipment and Age of Child

Ages	Swings	Seesaws	Monkeybars	Slides
0-4 yrs.	33.1%	32.2%	18.7%	48.1%
Other ages	7.1%	4.8%	2.8%	3.0%
5-14 yrs.	59.8%	63.0%	78.5%	48.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

These statistics indicated that more accidents occur on swings and monkeybars among older children five to fourteen years of age than to younger children. We can conclude, therefore, that this age group is at greater risk.

Debra Pepler studied the relationship between play and creativity. She found that play contributes to creating when it enables children to experiment with objects. To generate novel responses within play, experiences should

include diversified materials and materials that encourage investigation and experimentation Pepler (1986).

Between 1600 and 1800, play was regarded as a pursuit of children. Children were increasingly given their own toys, books, and clothing and segregated in their socialization. Play became something done by children, or when done by adults, had a childish quality (Fein and Rivkin, 1985-86).

Locke and Rousseau agreed that schooling and play should be solitary activities (Sutton and Smith, 1985). Historically, play was first trivialized, but, in time, it became idealized as children's behavior was increasingly controlled by schools, sports, playgrounds, toys and televisions (Sutton-Smith and Kelly-Bryne, 1984).

In 1916 Luella A. Palmer, assistant director of kindergartens in New York City, wrote that play develops bodily organs, keen and quick thought, widens mental horizons and promotes social development. Playgrounds were created by pioneers to compensate for the loss of resources resulting from crowded city living Palmer (1916).

Piaget (1962) and Vygotsky (1967) developed elaborate theories of human development that gave considerable attention to the importance of play. There was a growing realization that to understand human behavior fully, it was necessary to understand the individual's cognitive activity Fein and Rivkin (1988-89: 21).

In 1945, a landscape architect, C. T. Sorenson, and his associates established the first adventure playground in Emdrup, Denmark. The goal was to provide children in crowded cities the same opportunities for creative play as children in the country. He set up a large area of old cars, boxes, timbers,

boards and tools. The most comprehensive playgrounds were in Denmark and Sweden, which contain extensive areas for building, cooking, gardening, climbing, playing games and caring for animals. The American Adventure Playground Association, formed in 1976, has had minimal influence because of America's belief that adults know best. Concern is that playgrounds be sanitary and neat, and prevailing practices rooted in early guidelines of the 1900's stress ease of maintenance, physical fitness and outmoded theories of play (Fein and Rivkin, 1985-86).

Lady Allen of Hartwood (1968) described six periods of playground development in The Young at Play:

- (1) the prison period with level asphalt and concrete - "An administrative's heaven and a child's hell,"
- (2) the ironmongery period with its proliferation of prison bars,"
- (3) the concrete-pipe period, reflecting "paucity and invention,"
- (4) the novelty period with painted steam rollers and fire engines - "the pride of the town clerk,"
- (5) the maze period, "over-elaborate, over-clever, too slick - "the pride of the architects," and, finally,
- (6) the do-it-yourself period with playgrounds, where children can "test themselves against new challenges in complete freedom." Hurtwood (1968: pp. 18-19)

Today's adult-made playgrounds are classified into four types: traditional, designer or contemporary, adventure and creative (Frost, 1978).

The traditional playground has a flat barren area, equipped with steel structures as swings, slides, seesaws, climbers and a merry-go-round, fixed in concrete and arranged in a row. Equipment is designed exclusively for exercise.

The designer or contemporary playground is typically designed by a professional architect or designer, using wood and expensive stone with timber terracing. The aesthetic appeal is intended for adults.

The adventure playground is informal and enclosed within a fenced area, stocked with scrap building material, tools and provisions for animals and cooking. Leaders are available to assist children as needed.

The creative playground is a semiformal environment, combining features of other types to meet the needs of a specific community or school. It represents a compromise between highly formal playgrounds and the junk or adventure playground. A wide range of manufactured and handmade equipment and loose materials is provided, depending on the availability and play needs of children. Creative playgrounds are increasing in popularity, especially in preschools (Fein and Rivkin, 1985-86).

A survey, conducted by Monroe in which the Comprehensive Modified Playground Rating System adopted from the Playground Rating System, was used. Monroe surveyed playgrounds at 56% of 443 Title XX child care centers (commercial and non-profit) in Texas by random sampling. The most commonly used equipment was made of traditional steel, fixed variety, and the most common surfaces were grass, concrete, and asphalt with many playgrounds having concrete or asphalt surfaces under equipment even in fall zones.

The preschool had a wide range of portable equipment, including tricycles (74 percent of playgrounds surveyed) and tires (63 percent). Fewer than 35 percent contained blocks, boxes, barrels, rocking boats, saw horses, ropes, spools or boards. The playgrounds were rated by trained observers on twenty content, ten safety and ten functional characteristics. Based on the given scale, playgrounds were rated as follows: excellent - none, good - 5, fair - 25, poor - 22 and non-functional - 2. It is suggested from the survey that preschool playgrounds are of higher quality than those of elementary public schools.

Fundamentally, most playgrounds have two problems: equipment inappropriate to the developmental needs of children and safety hazards (Frost and Klein, 1979/1984). Safety hazards are caused by inappropriate equipment design, inappropriate installation, inadequate maintenance, and hard surfaces under and around equipment.

In 1983 Freedbery brought to the public's attention a problem of potentially grave consequences, in the publication entitled America's Poisoned Playgrounds. A survey conducted in New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and San Francisco revealed playground problems related to the use and disposal of toxic materials. Abandoned landfills and warehouses containing toxic wastes are being used by children as play areas. In many instances no consideration is given to the danger of playgrounds placed near freeways and auto emissions. There are no regulations for pesticides and toxic materials used on equipment at any level, local, state or national (Fein and Rivkin, 1985-86).

Chapter 3
OUTCOME STATEMENTS

Changes As A Result of Practicum

The purpose of this practicum was to reveal the use of unsafe, inappropriate playground equipment. Therefore, the anticipated outcome was change, a change in attitudes and training in its use and in designing and monitoring its structure.

To implement these changes, the following were accomplished in a ten-week period:

- . Shortened the vertical climber from seven to five feet.
- . Increased the depth of the surface under the swings eight to ten inches.
- . Met all requirements of the insurance company.
- . Trained all teachers to supervise effectively and to help children respect and observe playground rules.
- . Minimized the number of accidents.

The target group was the staff and children.

The objectives are measurable.

The objectives are measurable in performance terms.

The objectives are/or can be verified by the insurance company in its documentation of the decrease in accidents on the playground.

Evaluation

The director evaluated the results/outcomes of this practicum. The instrument used was the Playground Improvement Rating Scale (Young Children, March, 1989), "How Can Playground Be Improved?" A Rating Scale by Penny Lovell and Thelma Harms (Appendix A: 34).

The instrument used for evaluation was chosen for its credibility, thoroughness and form. The pre and post tests were easy to monitor and to score.

The evaluation took place in ten weeks, which allowed time for collecting data from similar sources (day care centers) about their safety record and changes on the site. The evaluation method demonstrated success in the reduced number of accidents and the thoroughness of safety checks.

The positive impact on the target group was the demonstration that objectives could be met on a very limited budget when members of a team worked cooperatively.

To enhance this spirit of cohesiveness, pretesting or interim monitoring was done so that everyone was aware of the problem and his responsibility in affecting a solution.

Success was apparent as children were observed enjoying a safe outdoor environment.

Chapter 4

INFORMATION COLLECTION

Relevant Literature

It was the duty of educators and staff members to rid the playgrounds of hazardous conditions that could harm and injure children. Accidents will happen even when we take all precautions to prevent them; nevertheless, we are responsible for and obligated to do the best we can.

"Less than ten percent of all injuries in centers result in liability claims. According to statistics, about forty percent of those injuries involve broken bones" (Center Management, 1990).

A recent survey of play concluded that conditions were safer at centers than in homes. The Center for Disease Control in Atlanta investigated 143 injuries reported of 5,300 children enrolled at 71 child care centers between June 1, 1987 and May 31, 1988, revealed the following data:

1. Fifty-eight percent (majority) of reported injuries resulted from falls, 68.50 percent of which involved the head.
2. Fourteen point three percent injuries for every 100 children was the estimated injury rate of thirty-five per 100 children.
3. Children climbing on playground equipment were particularly at risk of sustaining injuries and accounted for twelve percent of all injuries and

twenty-four percent of the most serious ones. Other most frequently sustained injuries included 44.1 percent gashes, 16.1 percent fractures and 12.6 percent bumps and bruises. Last on the list were sprains, dislocations, concussions, and human bites. The highest accident rate was among two-year-old children (Center Management, 1990).

In most publications, it appears that safety was the essential priority. Safety comes first in the selection of a site, the layout, location and design of equipment, materials used in construction, construction and installation of equipment and selection of age-appropriate equipment and surface materials.

The experience of others was the constant reminder of the advantage of a safe, cognitive, age-appropriate, and attractive outdoor environment. The foundation was laid with the physical site of the playground. The next ingredient was the human element, the staff, who must be fully aware of and teach (often re-enforcing) the established rules and regulations.

In addition, staff members working directly with children should be agile and alert, having the foresight to envision potential danger before it occurs (Center Management, 1990). It is extremely important that the proper ratio per square footage be maintained. In other words, that the number of children playing not exceed its limitations.

Inherent in any modification of a physical plant is finance. Budgets of most centers are limited and the cost of equipment seems to haunt many directors. To help solve this

problem, manufacturers were becoming more sensitive to this situation. Equipment could be purchased at different intervals and payments could be made in installments. Once the modular had been planned, a program for its fulfillment would be developed.

Alternative solutions were also suggested, including using commercial surfacing rather than bark, pea gravel and mulch. "Surfaces that are considered to be safe fall into three categories: organic loose material, inorganic loose material, and compact materials" Morris (1990: 48-53). Another solution was changing the height of the equipment, making it age-appropriate, and changing the type of playground (from typical to creative or adventure). Creative playgrounds are designed specifically to enhance children's creativity, incorporating construction and dramatic play (Stout, 1988).

Solution Strategy

The solution strategy was chosen because of the urgency of this matter and the financial status of the center. The center was cited by the insurance company for too many accidents and inappropriate equipment for preschool children. With the threat of losing coverage, the center prepared for change.

The politics could be the umbrella agency distributing Title XX funds, without which the center would find it impossible to function. The center must remain in total compliance in order to continue to receive funding.

Theoretically, Frobel's influence can be described as the front runner in early childhood and kindergarten beginnings. The importance of play and the use of suggested equipment, which is magnified today due to the fear of liability suits, is highly regarded. The time element was six months, from notification from insurance carrier to research and implementation.

The cost of materials to complete the project were:

Labor	- \$ 250.00
Lumber	- 150.00
Stain/Paint	- 80.00
Mulch/Bark	- 100.00
Sand	- 75.00

The expense was reduced considerably by networking. Labor was donated by three persons, at a savings of approximately \$700.00.

No legal fees were incurred in the research of the subject matter.

The strategy chosen to pursue this study was a joint agreement between the director and the board of directors. After both parties reached a decision, the insurance carrier was consulted. Making modifications in the existing equipment would permit the center to make the changes requested by the insurance company, without incurring a financial burden.

Implementation

Week one. The staff was assembled and introduced to the project and schedule of events. The title "Playground Safety"

was given to the ten-week project. The staff was informed of its uniqueness in the successful achievement of the implementation of this project. Each staff member was given a calendar with specific days that should be worked into lesson plans, which determined the length of time for the activities as well as the specific time the activity would commence.

Week two. The Playground Safety Checklist was introduced. A discussion was held as the staff attempted to understand each item on the checklist. Using the checklist as a pretest, the staff worked in pairs with each taking turns checking the grounds and equipment daily.

Week three. Each class was required to submit two rules considered important to preserve safety on the playground. Rules were defined, and the children were reminded of what could happen if rules were not obeyed.

Rules Made By Students

1. Sit straight in swings; wait until swing stops before getting off.
2. Keep sand in sand box.
3. Hold on to swings with both hands.
4. Let chips and bark remain on the ground.
5. Slide down slide. Do not attempt to walk.
6. Use fire pole to slide down from climber.
7. Only three should swing on the tire at a time.
8. Line up and walk into building.
9. Keep sand off sidewalk.
10. Keep water in water-play table.

The medical personnel was a registered nurse, employed as an emergency room nurse in a local hospital. The children were excited about her arrival and were exceptionally quiet. She proceeded to use this format:

1. Review of playground rules.
2. Introduction of emergency room (ER) instruments, thermometer, scissors, syringe, etc.
3. Introduction of ER equipment (hospital equipment in toy hospital on the premises) stretcher, wheelchair, gurney, bed, ambulance and I.V.
4. Role play of children who were bandaged in an effort to show what happens when there is an accident and someone is injured.

This experience made rules easier to understand and more realistic to the children. They touched items of which they were once afraid and learned the proper name of each instrument. Some of the children asked questions while others wanted their blood pressure taken.

Week four. Work began on the playground. This week commenced with the execution of plans.

1. vertical climber - once a seven-foot steel climber, it was shortened to four-and-a-half-feet. This height is safer and lessens the chance of children falling and injuring themselves. With hands extended upward, some children are nearly the same height as the equipment.
2. multiclamber - this piece of equipment has two (2) levels. The upper level of the structure was five

feet, and the lower level of three feet. After modifications, the five feet level was lowered to three feet, and the three feet lowered to one-and-a-half feet. Since two levels were lowered, the slide was also lowered and the fireman's pole decreased to six feet. These modifications transformed the equipment into age-appropriate, safe, enjoyable and challenging experiences for the children.

3. surfacing - surfacing on the playground at this time will be limited to bark and mulch. This is due to a limited budget, and, to date, no ideal, low-cost playground surfacing materials is available. Each material has drawbacks and advantages (Aronson, June 1990). However, the chosen surface is safe and easy to maintain, but it must be replaced annually.

Week five. A workshop on Playground Safety for Preschool Children was held thirty minutes a day for five days. Topics discussed were:

1. Playground checklist
2. Effective supervising
3. Using equipment safely
4. Teaching children the safe way
5. Matching abilities of children

Staff Workshop

Each staff member received a playground checklist, which was reviewed. It was agreed that the playground would be monitored each day by a staff member and the observations would be discussed.

The playground checklist was completed by staff members in these categories: Activities and Equipment, Safety and Health, Organization of Play Area, Variety of Play Surfaces, Surrounding Environment and Supervision and Use of Play Area.

What is Effective Supervision?

It is apparent that supervisors, caregivers, and aides are expected to have "super vision." Positioning oneself on the playground is essential as well as watching children from the corner of the eye and seeing children directly in front. The trained person allows no visual barriers and has the ability to watch several activities at once.

From time to time the children should be counted, in an effort to know where they are and what they are doing. Children should never be left unattended, even if a child has to be sent to summon a relief person.

Using Equipment Safely

Equipment improperly used and poorly supervised can be hazardous. When children are climbing, close supervision is needed by caregivers, and equipment should be checked frequently.

The number of children playing in each area should be limited. Shovels, buckets, sieves, cups and measuring apparatus can cause injuries, if improperly used. Sand, if thrown, can get into eyes and scratch eyeballs if eyes are rubbed.

Teaching Children the Safe Way

Children are taught positive instructions, which tends to be better received. Activities also help children learn to

work and play safely.

Matching Abilities of Children

The abilities of children should be matched with their environment, which encourages learning and promotes safety. Activities beyond the abilities of a child become safety hazards (Conger and Rose, 1979).

Week six. Reviewed and charted accidents prior to and during ten weeks.

Table 2
Number of Accidents
Prior To and During Ten Weeks

Number of Accidents		Playground	Inside
Over 3 yrs.	77	54	23
During 10 weeks	3	3	3

Week seven. Students role played following playground rules. Each student was given the opportunity to play role of teacher or student in demonstrating his/her understanding of playground rules. This exercise provided both the re-enforcement of playground rules and the fun of role playing for the children.

Week eight. Staff was observed using the Supervision and Use of Play area scale from the Playground Improvement Rating Scale, items 39 thru 49, Appendix B.

Week nine. Insurance company was informed in a letter of renovations to the playground, along with photographs of the areas that were in violation or out of compliance. The

playground is now developmentally fit and age-appropriate for preschool children, and staff and students are implementing rules.

Week ten. The Playground Improvement Rating Scale was used to complete the assessment of the playground including activities and equipment, safety and health, organization, variety of play surfaces surrounding the environment, and supervision and use of play area.

Students, staff, medical personnel and director were the participants. Responsibilities were the following:

Director was responsible for training staff, soliciting bids for modification, notifying medical personnel and setting up ten-week celebration.

Students were responsible for assisting in defining and following playground rules.

Staff was responsible for attending training sessions and assisting students in understanding and enforcing playground rules.

Medical personnel was responsible for demonstrating the treatment of an injured person.

The modified playground had a designated area for painting, table games, sand play, water play, and push toys in addition to the standard playground equipment modified to accommodate preschool children safely.

In order to comply with the insurance company's request that two pieces of inappropriate preschool equipment be replaced, the director hired a carpenter at minimum cost, by

networking. The director obtained lumber from a local builder's builder's supply store and paint, stain and preservative from the hardware store regularly used by the center. Equipment was to be modified, not replaced.

The center director made monthly reports on the center's progress to the board of directors and the session of the church. The board advised the center director of corrections at mid-points.

Data were collected from ten similar sources for a comparison of accidents, on playgrounds versus inside the facility. These sources were asked to cooperate by completing and returning an unsigned questionnaire

Data were collected from nine related sources, child care centers. The centers varied in size and location. Directors were asked to report accidents that had occurred over a three-year period. These accidents were categorized by their occurrence inside the facility or outside on the playground. The following information is based on what was reported by directors. An accident could be minor needing only first-aid or major, requiring doctor or hospital treatment.

Table 3
Number of Accidents At Other Centers
Categorized By Their Occurrence

Number of Accidents	Inside Facility	Playground
66	32	34
22	22	0
5	4	0

Table 3 (continued)

Number of Accidents	Inside Facility	Playground
54	43	11
106	56	50
37	14	23
553	450	103
1	1	0
77	23	54

The survey showed that three in nine center playground accidents exceeded those that occurred inside the facility.

Follow-On

Plans to make the strategy on going include continuously using the monitoring tool to evaluate the playground, the staff, and the playground checklist. A daily check of the status of the playground will be made. As money becomes available, the playground will continue to be improved.

This information will be available to the central agency and other similar programs upon request. A handbook is the culmination of the practicum, Appendix C. It would be welcomed and used by centers and the county child care program.

Chapter 5

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The purpose of this practicum was to reveal the use of unsafe, inappropriate playground equipment. It resulted in providing training in safety procedures and practices for a preschool playground for students and staff.

Conclusions of the research indicate that the heights and structures of equipment used on playgrounds must be carefully monitored to meet safety standards. For example, a vertical climber that was originally twelve feet high was definitely unsafe. Such a structure should be appropriately five feet high, measured by the raised arms of the students involved in its use. The steel vertical climber was constructed with twin ladders and twin fireman's poles for sliding down (one on each side). This allowed two children to climb to the top and slide down independently of each other. The strategy of this design was to shorten the climber by cutting it off at the top to avoid reinstallation. This method also saved time and money.

Increasing the depth of the surface under the swings and multiclimber eight to ten inches decreased the shock and severity of falls. The Consumer Product Safety Commission reported that in 1974 an estimated 118,000 playground-related injuries were incurred. These were injuries that required treatment in the emergency room. Seventy-eight percent of

these injuries were inflicted upon children under the age of ten years. In 1977, an estimated 150,773 injuries were related to playgrounds and playground equipment. The major cause was falls from various pieces of equipment. Head injuries were most serious and more frequent. Surfacing had become so serious a problem that expensive research was done. The results confirmed that fact and revealed the advantages and disadvantages of using various types of equipment.

The center's playground surface is sand and shredded bark of eight to ten inches under the swings and other equipment and bark in other areas. This material was chosen because of the center's financial situation. In the coming months, the center will solicit help from the P.T.A. to improve the surfacing. The sands packs itself and has to be fluffed periodically so that it will not pack, forming a cement-like hardness.

Another piece of equipment is the multiclimber which has two levels. The upper level is five feet, and the lower level is three feet. It also has a three-foot wide slide, a chain ladder, a balance beam, a tire swing, and a fire pole. After modification, the five-foot level was lowered to one-and-a-half-feet. The remaining components were age-appropriate.

To ensure the safety of the children and to maintain insurance coverage, the center worked diligently to meet all specifications required by the insurance company. These included the following:

1. shortening the vertical climber
2. lowering the multiclimber's upper level from five to

two-and-a-half-feet.

3. resurfacing under the equipment
4. maintaining adequate ratios on the playground
5. maintaining effective supervision by adults.

The expense of the project was held to a minimum; first, because of the lack of funds and second, because of the ability to network. A friend, who is a carpenter, assisted with modifications at a minimal cost.

After these requirements were completed, a photograph of the playground was taken and submitted to the insurance company, proving that we had efficiently and effectively accomplished the goal.

A one-week workshop was provided for the teachers in an effort to train them to supervise students effectively. Topics discussed were the playground checklist, effective supervising, using equipment safely, teaching children the safe way and a good match.

The playground checklist was discussed in depth so that everyone had a clear understanding of what was expected of him, and how to proceed to use the checklist effectively and objectively. Once the staff had completed the checklist, it became more conscious of playground hazards and more attentive to student's needs. Staff found that there was more to supervising children than just being physically present. Emphasis was placed on never leaving the children unattended as well as counting children in order to know where everyone is.

Children can and will use equipment in ways for which the equipment was not designed or intended to be used. Therefore, close supervision as to instruction or supervision on playground safety is imperative. Children were taught the safe way to use equipment by learning playground rules and proper behavior while on the playground. An experience-chart was made for the children and placed on the door leading to the playground. This served as a visible reminder or re-enforcement of what should be done each time they were allowed on the playground.

The staff learned that equipment and the size of the children should be matched. Smaller children should be restricted from equipment that is not age-appropriate and encouraged to play on equipment that is more appropriate and for their age and physical capability.

Accidents were minimal after the accomplishment of the forementioned objectives. The playground was safer because of the improvements and renovations. Students were safer because they internalized the rules and enjoyed the varied available activities; there, they played in a safe manner most of the time. The FYL reports that springtime is the peak season for playground accidents, with more occurring on monkeybars of children five to fourteen years of age. Emergency room visits of accidents related to playground equipment ranked swings first (78.1) and monkeybars second (57.2).

Conclusions

A survey, collecting data cover a three-year period from nine child care centers (including the target center as number nine), indicated that playground accidents were greater in

four in nine of the centers. These accidents usually required only minor first-aid treatment. The highest number of inside facility accidents -- bumps, bites and stumbles -- occurred in centers enrolling infants. Outside accidents involving pre-schoolers were caused by faulty or misused equipment, running, and falls.

As a result of this survey, the insurance company became alarmed about the number and severity of accidents occurring at the target center. In the three-year period four accidents required treatment by a physician. Three of the four happened on the playground.

It is apparent that every center has accidents; however, the number and severity are what everyone strives to minimize. This is accomplished by adequate supervision, resilient surfacing material and age-appropriate equipment. Tested material for surfacing should not impart a peak acceleration in excess of 200g's to an instrumented ANSI headform dropped on a surface from the maximum estimated fall height (U.S. Consumer Product Commission, 1986).

The implications are that the layout of the age-appropriate playground is well-planned, equipment is properly installed and well-maintained, the playground is checked periodically, students know and obey the rules and the staff is efficient, minimal accidents will occur.

The unanticipated outcome was not one of the objectives. It seems that the survey sheet was not as clear or specific as it could have been. A definition could have been given of the word accident. Then the time period would have been more

specific and only those would have been listed. Clarity is essential when one is soliciting information.

The survey would have been more accurate if the survey sheets had been properly completed and returned. The information could have been used to show more adequate statistics: the the age group having the highest number of accidents occurring on equipment, the number of accidents occurring inside the facility and those occurring outside the facility.

Recommendations

For others who possibly have the same problem, I suggest that the playground have a good location (not in a hazardous area). Whether building a new playground or renovating an old one, the secret is to plan. Plan the following: layout, type of equipment (age-appropriate), good installation and surfacing, definite playground rules and adequate supervision to provide a safe environment.

At the target center, surfacing will have to be updated continuously until a more permanent base can be purchased. In the interim, we must replace the surface every six months, rake the area weekly in an effort to maintain resilience, have weekly playground checks and re-enforce playground rules to minimize accidents.

At this point, the follow-on is a handbook, entitled Safety Beyond the Classroom, taken from Healthy Young Children, a manual for programs from NAEYC. This is a guide for the target center, as well as others seeking information. It is difficult to find information about "Preschool Playground" specifics; therefore, this handbook could be a

necessary tool. Floridians spend time outside year round; consequently, playground guidelines are very important. Networking would be provided by the local umbrella agency and the early childhood affiliate professional organizations.

The on-going plan is to continue to follow the format in an effort to decrease playground accidents by 100 percent. The students and staff can and will make it happen.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

PLAYGROUND IMPROVEMENT RATING SCALE

Playground Improvement Rating Scale

Program _____

Number of children _____ Date _____

Ages of children _____ Rater _____

Number of staff _____

Score each item: 3—outdoor play area meets this goal very well

2—outdoor play area needs to be improved to meet this goal

1—little or no evidence that outdoor play area meets this goal

(Examples of items to look for are listed in parentheses.)

Activities and equipment

Range of activities

- _____ 1. The equipment provides appropriate and stimulating levels of difficulty for all the age groups served. (infants, toddlers, preschool children, school-age children)
- _____ 2. A variety of equipment is provided to stimulate different types of physical activity. (balls, balance beams, wheel toys, swings, climbing equipment, jump ropes, ladders, planks)
- _____ 3. Some of the equipment and materials invite cooperative play. (outdoor blocks, rocking boat, dramatic play props)
- _____ 4. Creative materials are readily available for children. (clay, carpentry, paints, water, and sand)
- _____ 5. Some of the equipment is flexible so that it can be combined in different ways by the children with adult help if necessary. (planks, climbing boxes, ladders)
- _____ 6. The climbing equipment incorporates a variety of spatial relationships. (through tunnels, up or down ramps, over or under platforms)
- _____ 7. There is a suitable place for gardening. (window box, tubs with soil, garden plot)
- _____ 8. There are enough options for the children to choose from without unreasonable competition or waiting.

Safety and health

- _____ 9. The equipment is substantially constructed. (anchored climbing structures and swing frames)
- _____ 10. Cushioning is provided under swings and climbing apparatus. (loose sand or tanbark at least 1 foot deep within a containing edgeboard, rubber padding)
- _____ 11. Swing seats are made of pliable material.
- _____ 12. Swings are separated from areas where children run or ride wheel toys.
- _____ 13. Protective railings prevent children from falling from high equipment.
- _____ 14. Equipment is well maintained. (no protruding nails, splinters, flaking paint, broken parts, frayed ropes)
- _____ 15. The play area is routinely checked and maintained. (trash picked up, grass mowed, good drainage)
- _____ 16. The health hazards from animal contamination are minimized. (sand box covers, fences, children wash hands after playing outdoors)

Organization of play area

- _____ 17. The play area is well defined. (fence that cannot be climbed)
- _____ 18. There are clear pathways and enough space between areas so that traffic flows well and equipment does not obstruct the movement of children.

- _____ 19. Space and equipment are organized so that children are readily visible and easily supervised by teachers.
- _____ 20. Different types of activity areas are separated. (tricycle paths separate from swings, sand box separate from climbing area)
- _____ 21. Open space is available for active play.
- _____ 22. Some space encourages quiet, thoughtful play. (grassy area near trees, sandbox away from traffic)
- _____ 23. Blocks and props can be set up outdoors for dramatic play.
- _____ 24. Art activities can be set up outdoors.
- _____ 25. The area is easily accessible from the classroom.
- _____ 26. The area is readily accessible to the restrooms.
- _____ 27. A drinking fountain is available.
- _____ 28. Accessible and sufficient storage is provided.
- _____ 29. A portion of the play area is covered for use in wet weather.
- _____ 30. An adequate area is sunny in cold weather.
- _____ 31. An adequate area of shade is provided in hot weather.

Variety of play surfaces

- _____ 32. A hard surface is available to ride wheel toys, play group games, or dance.
- _____ 33. Soil, sand, and water are available for digging and mud play.
- _____ 34. A grassy or carpeted area is provided.
- _____ 35. Good drainage keeps all surfaces usable.

Surrounding environment

- _____ 36. The fence creates an effective screen for the playground by blocking out unpleasant or by admitting pleasant aspects of the surrounding environment. It protects children from intrusion by passers-by.
- _____ 37. The setting visible from the play area is pleasant.

- _____ 38. The location is relatively quiet. (little noise from railroads, traffic, factories)

Supervision and use of play area

- _____ 39. A sufficient number of adults supervise the children during outdoor play.
- _____ 40. Responsibility for specific areas is assigned to staff to assure that the entire playground is well supervised.
- _____ 41. Teachers focus their attention on and interact with the children to enhance learning and maintain safety. (adults do not talk together at length or sit passively when supervising children)
- _____ 42. Children are guided to use the equipment appropriately. (climb on ladders instead of tables)
- _____ 43. The daily schedule includes morning and afternoon active play periods for all age groups, either outdoors or in suitably equipped indoor areas.
- _____ 44. The schedule for use of the play area minimizes overlap of age groups to avoid conflicts, overcrowding, and undue competition for materials.
- _____ 45. Special activities are planned for and set up in the outdoor area daily. (games, painting)
- _____ 46. Teachers add to or rearrange large equipment at least every six months. (spools, crates, tunnels)
- _____ 47. Teachers encourage and assist children in rearranging small flexible equipment. (ladders, planks, boxes)
- _____ 48. Most of the children are constructively involved with the equipment and activities in the playground.
- _____ 49. Children help clean up the area and put away equipment.

_____ Total score

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Survey Sheet

Please fill in all blanks on this sheet, then return immediately to the address at the bottom of the page.

Enrollment _____

Infants _____

Toddlers _____

Preschool _____

Number of teaching staff _____

Accidents occurring on Playground

Total number of documented accidents in past 3 years.

Infants _____

Toddlers _____

Preschool _____

Accidents occurring inside Facility

Total number of documented accidents in past 3 years.

Infants _____

Toddlers _____

Preschool _____

Return to : Mrs. Marva S. Jenkins
809 N.W. 14th Terr.
Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. 33311

APPENDIX C

SAFETY BEYOND CLASSROOMS SAFETY MANUEL

SAFETY BEYOND THE CLASSROOMS

SUBMITTED BY: MARVA S. JENKINS

TAKEN FROM: HEALTHY YOUNG CHILDREN

A MANUAL FOR PROGRAMS

NAEYC

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PLAYGROUND SAFETY

MAJOR CONCEPTS

- * Most injuries can be prevented.
- * Regular safety checks of the indoor and outdoor environment should be made and improvements implemented immediately.
- * Infants and toddlers require special safety precautions.
- * Safety education for staff, children, and parents must be provided.
- * All staff must be trained in first aid and prepared to carry out the center's emergency procedures.

SAFETY

Injuries are the result of problems in the environment, a mismatch between a child's abilities and activities, and/or a lack of adult supervision. Sometimes there are hidden dangers that are seen only after a child or staff member is injured. Injuries can often be prevented by

- * being aware of potential hazards
- * taking action to eliminate or reduce these hazards
- * knowing what to do in an emergency

CREATING A SAFE FACILITY

A safe facility is arranged so that children can play freely without harming themselves or others. A safe environment allows children to learn by taking risks and challenging themselves and, at the same time, protects them from injury. A sterile, risk-free environment and rules that do not let children play and explore are not healthy.

Your program must follow certain safety standards and practices to be licensed. Local building, sanitary, and fire safety codes must also be observed. You can also create a safe environment by carefully following these additional basic guidelines.

- * Be alert to hazards both indoors and outdoors and eliminate or avoid them.
- * Look at the world through the eyes of a young child - it is colorful, mysterious, and has new places and objects to experiment with and explore. Get down on your hands and knees to see what a child sees. You may be surprised at what you find!
- * Encourage all staff to participate in conducting the checks and planning ways to deal with hazards. Parents and older children can help too.
- * Know what you're buying or what is being donated to your program. Read labels and instructions carefully.

SAFETY BEYOND THE CLASSROOMS

PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds provide the space in which children can challenge themselves physically. While it is important for children to take risks and experiment, they can also get hurt. Many common playground facilities are not appropriate for younger children.

Whether the playground you use is on your property or down the street, you can reduce the chance that a child will be injured by following these basic safety guidelines. These guidelines also apply to home play areas so you may wish to share them with parents. Many injuries are due to misuse of equipment. The safest equipment is designed to prevent misuse, but there is no substitute for good supervision.

- * Supervise children closely at all times to prevent misuse of the equipment such as swinging too high, running close to moving swings, or playing on equipment that is too advanced. If possible, assign extra staff to areas of high risk.

- * Check play equipment and its surroundings once a week; use the Playground Safety Checklist and the end of the handbook.

- * Look for sharp edges, rough surfaces, and loose or broken parts. Cover sharp or protruding parts with heavy, waterproof tape.

- * Cover the ground under equipment with 8" to 12" of a soft, loose, resilient material such as shredded tires, pea gravel, wood chips, or loose sand.

- * Recognize that cement, asphalt, and hard-packed or frozen soil or sand are dangerous play surfaces, even when children are supervised. Rake sand and other loose materials frequently to keep them soft.

- * Keep area clean from glass, litter, and large rocks.

- * Teach children how to play safely. Involve them in making rules for playground behavior, and enforce these rules consistently. Praise children when they use the playground appropriately.

- * Remove a misbehaving child from play and explain how her or his actions could hurt someone.

- * Make sure all play areas are protected from streets and traffic to minimize the chance of a child darting into the street.

- * Check the outdoor environment for poisonous plants and remove them, if possible.

RIDING TOYS

Have several sizes of tricycles or other riding toys available for the older toddlers and preschoolers. If a child is too large for the tricycle, it will be unstable. If the child is too small, the tricycle may be difficult to control properly.

- * Use low-slung riding toys with seats close to the ground and a wide wheel base. They are more stable.

- * Avoid vehicles with sharp edges, particularly fenders.

- * Look for pedals and handgrip with non-skid surfaces to prevent children's hands and feet from slipping.

- * Teach children safe riding habits and check on their performance frequently.

- * Do not allow wheeled vehicles on sidewalks or near streets, because low tricycles cannot be seen by cars or trucks.

- * Do not allow children to ride double. Carrying a passenger makes the vehicle unstable.

- * Teach children that riding down hills is dangerous. A tricycle can pick up so much speed that it becomes almost impossible to stop.

- * Teach children to avoid sharp turns, to make all turns at low speed, and not to ride down steps or over curbs.

- * Advise children to keep hand and feet away from moving spokes.

- * Keep the vehicles in good condition. Check regularly for missing or damaged pedals and hand-grips, loose handlebars and seats, broken parts, and other defects.

- * Cover any sharp edges and protrusions with heavy, waterproof tape.

- * Don't leave riding toys outdoors overnight. Moisture can cause rust and weaken metal parts.

SAFE PLAYGROUND HABITS

SWINGS

- * Sit in the center of the swing. Never stand or kneel.
- * Hold on with both hands.
- * Stop the swing before getting off.
- * Stay far away from moving swings.
- * Be sure only one person is on a swing at a time.
- * Don't swing empty swings or twist unoccupied rings.
- * Keep head and feet out of the exercise rings.

SLIDES

- * Wait your turn. Give the person ahead lots of room.
- * Hold on with both hands climbing up.
- * Before sliding down, make sure no one is in front.
- * Slide down feet first, sitting up, one at a time.
- * After sliding down, get away from the front of the slide.

CLIMBING APPARATUS

- * Only 1 person at a time.
- * Use both hands, and use the lock grip (fingers and thumbs).
- * Stay away from other climbers.

SEESAWS (older children only)

- * Sit up straight and face each other.
- * Hold on tight with both hands.
- * Keep feet out from underneath the board.
- * Tell your partner when you want to get off. Get off carefully, and hold your end so it rises slowly until your partner's feet touch the ground.

PLAYGROUND SAFETY CHECKLIST

DATE: _____

CHECKED BY: _____

ITEM	TRUE	FALSE	DATE MADE CORRECTION	CORRECTIONS/COMMENTS
------	------	-------	----------------------	----------------------

ALL EQUIPMENT

Nuts, bolts, and screws are recessed, covered, or sanded smooth and level.

Nuts and bolts are tight.

Metal equipment is free of rust and chipping paint.

Wooden equipment is free of splinters and rough surfaces.

Equipment is free of sharp edges.

Ropes, chains, and cables have not frayed or worn out.

Equipment has not shifted or become bent.

There are no "V" entrapment angles on any part of the equipment.

There are no open holes in the equipment forming finger traps.

There is no corrosion at points where equipment comes into contact with ground surface.

All parts of the equipment are present.

Anchors for equipment are stable and buried below ground level.

Children who use equipment are of the age/developmental level for which the equipment was designed.

ITEM	TRUE	FALSE	DATE MADE	CORRECTION	CORRECTIONS/COMMENTS
------	------	-------	-----------	------------	----------------------

ALL EQUIPMENT CONT.

Slide ladders have handrails on both sides, and flat steps.

There is a flat surface at the bottom of the slide (if the slide is more than 4' high, the flat surface should be 16" in length).

The bottom of the sliding surface is no more than 15" above the ground.

There are no "tube" slides.

There are no circular slides in the preschool area.

The sliding surface is not made of wood or fiberglass.

If the slide is made in several pieces, there are no gaps or rough edges in the sliding surface.

The steps or rungs on the slide are slip-resistant.

Steps and rungs are regularly spaced, 7" to 10" apart, from top to bottom.

Rungs are between 3/4" and 1 1/2" in diameter.

CLIMBING EQUIPMENT

An adequate impact-absorbing surface under the structure extends 6' beyond the slides of the apparatus.

Handholds stay in place when grasped.

Equipment height does not exceed 6' in height.

Climbers have regularly spaced footholds (7" to 10" apart) from top to bottom.

ITEM	TRUE	FALSE	DATE	MAD	CORRECTION	CORRECTIONS/COMMENTS
<u>CLIMBING EQUIPMENT CONT.</u>						

There is an easy, safe way out for children when they reach the top.

Rungs are painted in bright or contrasting colors so children will see them.

Rungs, climbing bars, and handrails are between 3/4" and 1/2" in diameter.

There is a 28" to 32" (or higher) barrier around preschool equipment that is more than 30" above the ground.

The space between slats of barriers does not exceed 4".

There is no head entrapment area on the apparatus.

GROUND SURFACE

All elevated play equipment (slides, swings, bridges, seesaws, climbing apparatus) has 8" to 12" of impact-absorbing material underneath, such as sand, pea gravel, or wood chips. (Pea gravel and wood chips should be avoided in the infant/toddler areas.)

Surfaces are raked weekly to prevent them from becoming packed down and to remove hidden hazards (e.g., litter, sharp objects, animal feces).

Standing water is not found on the surface or inside equipment.

ITEM	TRUE	FALSE	DATE MADE CORRECTION	CORRECTIONS/COMMENTS
------	------	-------	----------------------	----------------------

SPACING

Swings have adequate clearance in both directions (14' beyond the farthest extension of the swing; 8' of impact-absorbing surface, plus a 6' safety zone).

Swings are at least 18" from each other and 28" away from the frame.

Slides have 2 1/2 to 3 yards of space at the bottom.

There is at least 8' between all equipment.

Boundaries between equipment are visible to children (for instance, painted lines or low bushes).

Play areas for active play (e.g., bike riding, running & games) are located away from areas for quiet activities (e.g., sandbox, outdoor tables).

SLIDES

An adequate impact-absorbing surface under structure extends 5' beyond the sides of the apparatus.

Slides are 6' in height or less.

Side rims are at least 2 1/2" high (5" for circular or wave slides).

Slides have a flat surface at the top (with safety barriers).

ITEM	TRUE	FALSE	DATE MADE	CORRECTION	CORRECTIONS/COMMENTS
------	------	-------	-----------	------------	----------------------

SWINGS

Swing seats with back supports and safety bars are available for toddlers and children with disabilities.

All swing seats are made of canvas, rubber, or other pliable material.

There are no "S" or open-ended hooks.

Hanging rings are less than 5", or more than 10", in diameter (smaller or larger than child's head).

The point at which the chain/rope and the seat meet is designed to prevent entrapment.

Chain link openings do not exceed 1/4" in diameter. When stationary, all seats are level.

There are no more than two swings on any one apparatus.

Preschool swing seats are at a maximum height of 18".

The swing seat cannot rise more than 6' above the surface.

For tire swings, there is at least a 19" safety zone between the support structure and the farthest extensions of the swing.

Tire swings have drainage openings.

Plane swings (gliders) have stable handholds, footholds, and seats.

ITEM	TRUE	FALSE	DATE MADE	CORRECTION	CORRECTIONS/COMMENTS
------	------	-------	-----------	------------	----------------------

SEESAWS

There is an adequate impact-absorbing surface under the structure and beyond the sides of the apparatus.

The seating does not reach more than 5' above the ground.

The fulcrum is enclosed or designed to prevent pinching.

Handholds stay in place when grasped, without turning or wobbling.

A wooden block is on the underside of the seats or a rubber tire segment is buried in the surface under the seats.

SANDBOXES

Sandboxes are located in a shaded spot.

The sand is raked at least every week to check for debris and to provide exposure to air and sun.

The box is covered at night to protect from moisture and animal excrement.

The sandbox has proper drainage.

ITEM	TRUE	FALSE	DATE MADE	CORRECTION	CORRECTIONS/COMMENTS
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ROCKING EQUIPMENT

There is an adequate impact-absorbing surface under the structure and extending 6' beyond the side of the apparatus.

Seating surfaces are less than 39" above the ground.

There are no parts that could cause a pinching or crushing injury.

Handholds stay in place when grasped.

Footrests stay in place.

TUNNELS

The internal diameter of the tunnel is at least 2' 6".

There are two exits from the tunnel.

The tunnel is designed to drain freely.

GENERAL ENVIRONMENT

The playground can be reached safely by children (on foot or bicycle).

The playground is accessible to people with disabilities.

If needed, a suitable perimeter fence is provided (e.g., if the playground is near a road, pool, or pond). Seating (benches, outdoor tables) is in good condition.

ITEM	TRUE	FALSE	DATE MADE CORRECTION	CORRECTIONS/COMMENTS
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GENERAL ENVIRONMENT CONT.

Signs give information about

- * where to seek help in case of an emergency
- * restrictions on the use of playground (hours, pets)
- * name and address of playground operator (to report hazards)

A road sign advises motorists that a playground is nearby.

Trash receptacles are provided and located away from the play areas.

Poisonous plants are removed from play area.

There is a source of clean drinking water available in the play area.

There is shade.

The entire play area can be seen easily for good supervision.

SAFETY EDUCATION

Provide children with the skills to prevent injuries and to care for themselves and others in case of emergency. Keep in mind that your own attitudes and behaviors toward safety are as important as the physical set up of your facility. Use these different ways to give safety messages to children and staff.

- * Be a positive role model.
- * Give clear statements when explaining the correct, safe way to do something.
- * Compliment children for doing things safely.
- * Involve the children in making and enforcing rules. This will increase their safety awareness and help them feel involved. You may also want to involve children in making safety checks.
- * Teach children what to do in an emergency and where to get help.

In addition to your own ideas, you may wish to use safety curricula from a variety of resources. Select the age-appropriate safety curriculum that best fits the needs and philosophy of your program. Whatever you decide to do, remember that safety education is more than just a one-time activity. Safety concepts should be integrated into all your activities. For example:

- * Include poison prevention in nutrition education.
- * Children can make a doll house from cardboard boxes or hollow blocks. Ask them to use real or paper dolls to act out home hazards such as hot surfaces, poisonous products, toys left on stairs.
- * Include messages about clothing into discussions on weather and appropriate dress. Suggest that children wear light colors at night or on dark, rainy days and dark colors on bright, snowy days.